THE EXPEDIENCY OF A *REVOLUTION* CONSIDERED.

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THE EXPEDIENCY OF A *REVOLUTION* CONSIDERED:

IN WHICH THE

ADVANTAGES

HELD OUT TO THE

PEOPLE

ARE

EXAMINED AND REFUTED.

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BY WAY OF TRADE

TO FRANCE

ARE

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LONDON:

THE EXPEDIENCY OF A *REVOLUTION* CONSIDERED.

THE good ſenſe of the People of England is proverbial in other countries; and it is not a little extraordinary, that ſome of our own writers ſhould think ſo meanly of it as to imagine they can perplex it by the ridiculous reaſoning, the ſophiſtries, and palpable miſrepreſentations of fact and hiſtory, which they have lately obtruded upon the patience of their country.

THESE authors, whatever other miſtakes they have been guilty of, have at leaſt the merit of being juſt to their own talents, and of perfectly underſtanding the force and weight of their arguments, as well as the true merit of the cauſe in which they have employed them; and they have accordingly, with a laudable humility, addreſſed them only to perſons, or to the paſſions and prejudices of perſons, whom the conſtant and laborious employments of their lives have deprived

of the leiſure, and of the means and habits of acquiring ſufficient knowledge to decide with truth and certainty upon any complicated propoſition.

TREATISES upon politics, and metaphyſical ſpeculations upon the organization of Civil Societies, have now for the firſt time been addreſſed to thoſe claſſes which have hitherto been ſuppoſed to be far removed from any opportunity of acquiring the means of forming a right judgment about them; and innumerable theories have been circulated with induſtry wherever the minds of men, unimproved by education or ſtudy, were ſuppoſed the moſt unqualified to diſcover their abſurdity, and the danger and miſchief with which they were charged. Queſtions ſo abſtruſe and difficult, and propoſitions ſo abſtract and viſionary, that Locke or Milton would have decided upon with heſitation and trembling, have become ſo familiar, and appear ſo eaſy of ſolution to the illiterate and ignorant (for ignorance can never doubt, and its firſt fear is from a conſciouſneſs of itſelf), that the whole ſyſtem of human ſociety ſeems in danger of being reverſed, and the laws, order, and even the experience of mankind, are expoſed to be confounded and forgotten in a new ſcramble and colliſion of ſyſtems.

It will be the purpoſe of the following ſheets to conſider with candour the truth of ſome, and the tendency of other opinions, which ſeem the moſt ſpeciouſly calculated to deceive the induſtrious claſſes of men, the moſt reſpectable, the moſt virtuous, and probably the happieſt of Society; and to detect ſome of the moſt dangerous of thoſe fallacies and falſehoods which are with ſuch perſevering malignity diſtributed amongſt them, with a deſign to lead them from their duty and their happineſs together, to diſguſt them with their lot in life, and, poiſoning their minds with ingratitude and envy, to make them become the inſtruments of foreign crimes and ambition.

To ſuch as are unacquainted with the prodigious influence which belongs to thoſe who are in poſſeſſion of the public channels of information, eſpecially if they are united in the ſame principle or deſign, it will appear almoſt incomprehenſible, that in ſo ſhort a time ſo extraordinary a change ſhould have taken place in the opinions of any part of Society, that it ſhould have become neceſſary to defend the excellencies of the Conſtitution of England, not againſt the envy of our foreign enemies, nor the ambition of our Princes or Miniſters, but againſt the People itſelf. But

ſurely ſuch a defence can neither be hoſtile nor dangerous; nor can there be much difficulty in perſuading the People to defend, with the courage and the conſtancy of their anceſtors, that immortal barrier which they have reared between their poſterity and every ſpecies of ſervitude and diſhonour. The good ſenſe of Engliſhmen will, no doubt, be the ſole tribunal to which we need appeal, and they will pronounce with truth and energy their ſentence in ſo intereſting and important a cauſe.

NOTHING can be more falſe and inſidious than the attempt which is made to diſtinguiſh between the Conſtitution and the will of the People. From this ſource all juſt power muſt derive, and no people can be governed without deſpotiſm or tyranny who are governed by a Conſtitution which they have not accepted or approved. The Conſtitution of England has been mentioned in two different ſenſes, both of which I ſhall explain, and prove, that in both it is the will of the People. In one ſenſe, we underſtand by the Conſtitution ſimply the diſtribution of powers; and then we mean, that the people of this country have immemorially choſen to be governed by a King, Lords, and Commons; in another and

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more popular ſenſe, we generally underſtand by the Conſtitution the whole maſs and collection of the laws and uſages of the kingdom, whether they relate to the government or the individual; and then we underſtand by it that adminiſtration of juſtice and thoſe rights, that perſonal ſecurity and liberty, and every other advantage which we derive either from the form of our government, or from thoſe laws which the people have willed, either by the act of their Repreſentatives in Parliament, or by ſome other mode, of which the memory is loſt in the darkneſs of antiquity, but of which the conſtant uſage is a certain and irrefragable proof.

"In England," we are told *, "it is not "difficult to perceive that every thing has a "Conſtitution except the Nation. Every Society "and Aſſociation that is eſtabliſhed firſt agreed "upon a number of original articles digeſted "into form, which are its Conſtitution; it then "appointed its officers, whoſe powers and autho- "rities are deſcribed in that Conſtitution; and "the government of that Society then com- "menced: thoſe officers, by whatever name

* Paine's "Rights of Man," Part II. page 2.

"they

" they are called, have no authority to add, to " alter, or abridge the original articles; it is " only to the conſtituting power that this be- " longs."

Upon ſuch an argument, or rather ſuch an aſſertion as this, are we called upon to acknowledge that we have no Conſtitution at all, though it be perfectly clear that we have lived under the ſame Conſtitution, in the firſt ſenſe (that of the diſtribution of powers), as far back as we have any certain hiſtory or memory of events; and though it be ſelf-evident, in the ſecond or more general ſenſe, our Conſtitution of to-day is that very ſame Conſtitution ameliorated by ſucceſſive improvements, and amended ſometimes by the peaceable expreſſion of the people's will in Parliament, and ſometimes after their appeal to Heaven in the field.

This Conſtitution, or Government by King, Lords, and Commons, which has ſurvived invaſion and conqueſts, and acquired ſtrength and ſtability from inſurrections and rebellions; to which our anceſtors have perpetually appealed; from which we derive all our rights, and for an attempt

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to ſubvert which we have put to death ſo many perſons who had otherwiſe been heroes; for which one Sovereign has bled upon the ſcaffold, and another, with his poſterity, been ſent to wander in foreign realms, and fill the world with aſtoniſhment and reverence for our inſtitutions and unconquerable love of liberty; this Conſtitution, we are told, does not exiſt, becauſe we have no mouldy parchment or record of original articles digeſted into form, nor copy of the appointment of officers, nor deſcription of their powers and authorities. By ſuch a miſerable ſophiſtry as this, it may be poſſible, though I ſhould think it difficult, to perplex the weakeſt underſtandings; but the whole Hiſtory of England is a perpetual confutation of ſo abſurd a pretenſion; and the Hiſtory of Mankind, which is univerſally ſilent upon the original formation of human ſociety, can preſent no better, no firmer title than immemorial conſent.

The next argument againſt the exiſtence of our Conſtitution is, that the officers appointed by I know not what Clubs or Aſſociations, have no authority to add to, alter, or abridge their original

nal *articles*. But the Conſtitution of England poſſeſſes thoſe powers, and has conſtantly exerted them, correcting and repreſſing the abuſes which are inſeparable from all human inſtitutions, and adding to its ſtupendous fabrick as faſt as experience and time developed the neceſſity or the advantage of improvements.

No doubt this is a moſt extraordinary defect in our ſyſtem, that it ſhould poſſeſs the means of repairing its deviations and correcting the errors of its courſe; that it ſhould ever be ready and competent to re-invigorate and regenerate itſelf; and that its duration and advancement ſhould be one unbroken progreſs towards perfection: a fault like this, whether it exiſt in its original deſign, or be ſubſequent and adventitious, is undoubtedly unpardonable; for it is ſufficient of itſelf to deſtroy a million of theories, and to prove that order may be eſtabliſhed by the good ſenſe and virtues of a people, which ſhall be able to unite and to govern through ſucceſſive ages, and under every event and contingency, without being obliged, upon the occurrence of every novelty and unforeſeen circumſtance, to revert to the original

principles

principles of ſociety, and aboliſhing all its previous inſtitutions and uſages, and diſſolving all its original engagements, aſſemble itſelf to form new compacts and agreements as faſt as any caſe occurred in which the Government had received no ſpecific power or commiſſion to act by.

PERHAPS it will not be warranted to ſuſpect that the Conſtitution of England, being of ſomewhat greater importance than any of theſe Clubs and Aſſociations which have yet come to my knowledge, involving the univerſal intereſts, and being the common concern of the nation, as well as being calculated to ſtand the ſhock of ruder elements, and to remain through a longer period of time, may have been conſtructed with ſomewhat more art, attention, and firmneſs; and that having profited by the progreſſive intelligence and convictions of the nation, it is become ſomewhat more hardy and robuſt than theſe ephemerous Clubs, which ſeem to make themſelves the ſtandard and model of all political connections, and to be offended that any machine ſhould exiſt ſuperior in ſtrength, reſources, or diuturnity, to themſelves. But probably theſe very Aſſociations have been able to make periodical changes or improve-

ments upon their aſſemblies, without undergoing ſo many diſſolutions of their ſocieties, and have advanced by regular progreſſion to that maturity and whatever ſpecies of perfection they poſſeſs. Clubs, however, would be much better calculated to become the models of Conſtitutions, if men were born in clubs as they are in ſocieties. No man ever yet choſe, ſo far as I know, whether he would belong to this nation or to another; nor do we become, I imagine, members of France or England preciſely in the ſame manner in which we may inſcribe our names in a Revolution Society. Were men to be born in clubs, I imagine, theſe perfect ſocieties would find themſelves obliged to invent new laws, and to be governed by a very different code; and that even here we ſhould ſoon find ingrafted all the vices of "hereditaryſhip," as it is called by an elegant writer, and diſcover through all the "civiſm" and diſintereſtedneſs of our reformers, that men cannot diveſt themſelves of the natural deſire of ſecuring for their poſterity the permanence of thoſe laws, and of that conſtitution, under which they themſelves have been deſirous or contented to live. This is the crime of our anceſtors who have tyrannically entailed the

Conſtitution

Conſtitution upon us, and amending it from time to time, probably with the treaſonable intention of making it more certain and permanent, have uſurped the deſpotic right of tranſmitting laws and liberty to their poſterity.

THERE is one maxim which I think peculiarly dangerous among that variety of exalted opinions, thoſe viſions and theories which generate ſo eaſily in the falſe ſunſhine of this deleterious philoſophy; and I ſhall examine it with the more attention, becauſe it has a danger peculiar to itſelf, and which it does not, I think, participate with many others of its family, that of being abſtractedly true.

THIS maxim, I believe, cannot be ſtated with more preciſion than by ſaying, "that the will of "the majority of the members of any nation is "the law."—From this we are to infer that no laws have any efficacy or obligation, nor any Government a juſt or legal duration, after the majority of the people governed have choſen to withdraw their conſent and allegiance, or to ſuperſede them by other inſtitutions.

THOSE who propagate this doctrine with ſo much earneſtneſs and perſeverance amongſt the

people, it ſhould be remembered, are the ſame who would perſuade them, that they have no Conſtitution, and that they have never conſented to be governed by the exiſting laws of their country; nay, they are the ſame who have gone ſo far as to aſſert, that "were government now to begin "in England, the people could not be brought to "eſtabliſh the ſame ſyſtem they now ſubmit to *;" from which premiſes it is eaſy to deduce that this ſyſtem is a tyranny and uſurpation.

WERE government now to begin in England, and we were to be deprived of the experience of ſo many centuries, in which we ought to have learned what ſpecies of government were moſt conformable to our manners, our habits, prejudices, and inclinations, to the extent of our poſſeſſions, and the magnitude and multiplicity of our intereſts and affairs; were our preſent proſperity to ceaſe, and to afford no longer a mighty proof of the fitneſs and excellency of that inſtitution under which it has ariſen, I will not undertake to prove that the people would be brought to eſtabliſh the ſame ſyſtem; but while we can look back upon hiſtory, or forward into thoſe brilliant proſpects of the fruits of

* "Letter to Addreſſers," page 16.

peace,

peace, induſtry, and order, which ſeem only to await the hand of Time to gather and throw into our lap; I cannot be brought to believe that the people of England, as a body (however ſome of them, I think, not ſufficiently aware of the danger of innovation at this preciſe period of time, may deſire ſome partial reform or improvement, or to get rid of the ſubjects of ſome well-founded complaints)—I ſay, I cannot believe that the people of England, could they be aſſembled on a plain, would deſire any other form of government than this very Conſtitution which is denied to exiſt, or change for any other ſyſtem the moſt perfect of political inſtitutions.

But the will of the people, whoſe ſovereignty, we all confeſs, is liable to the ſame check and controul which arreſts the power of other lawgivers, and brings their haughty pleaſure to the bar of juſtice and reaſon—the will of the people, to be legal, muſt be juſt; and what is more, to be efficacious it muſt be wiſe. The will of the people to pull down and to deſtroy, can be binding only ſo far as the will of other tyrants, who are in poſſeſſion of power to make themſelves feared, and of force to command obedience. A juſt authority may command an illegal act, and an uſurped

uſurped authority may diſpenſe juſtice. Though the people can never uſurp, it may tyrannize; and though a deſpot can never have a juſt title to obedience, he may find it in the equity of his laws, and the benevolence of his diſpenſations; but as theſe are no excuſe for his unjuſt uſurpation, ſo is the title of the people no palliation for their tyranny. Juſtice is an eternal and invariable rule, and the people have no more right to diſpenſe with it than the Pope or the Lama. Laws are wiſe or fooliſh, beneficial or deſtructive to ſociety, from their own nature and tendency, whether they be made by Solon or Solyman, by Alfred or Richard, or by a Council or a Parliament, or a Primary Aſſembly of the People. The people, therefore, cannot make a thing either wiſe or juſt, by the ſimple operation of willing it; but are equally bound to exerciſe their judgment, and be guided by their conſcience, in every act of power and authority, as delegated ſovereignty itſelf; and it is as lawful and as virtuous too, to reſiſt their injuſtice, as that of any Prince or Government whatſoever.

No man, no people poſſeſſes a diſcretion or election to be unjuſt and tyrannical: wherever power exiſts, it has this limitation of juſtice. It

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is juſtice which gives it a moral title to obedience, and makes rebellion and reſiſtance a crime. A majority of the people may oppreſs the minority; and if they were ever to imagine themſelves inveſted with this unlimited ſovereignty, this god-like prerogative of willing only what was juſt, they would be more likely to oppreſs, than the minority, becauſe they would be ſure of their title to legiſlate, and of their power to command compliance: but the minority, who had neither the title nor the force, would be careful not to puſh their uſurpation into ſuch acts of tyranny as would unite and awaken thoſe who had both the right and the power of ſovereignty, whenever they were inclined to aſſert it.

If a people have abſtractedly the right to govern, the impoſſibility of exerciſing the government by themſelves is ſo evident, that the firſt queſtion which would be agitated in any of theſe ideal conventions muſt neceſſarily be, to whom they ſhould delegate it; for no man as yet having ſacrificed any part of his natural rights or liberty, none could obey any other will than his own, without a tyranny on the one part, and weakneſs or cowardice on the other: nor need he even obey the majority of opinions, becauſe not having as

yet

yet acceded to any agreement whatever, he would remain at liberty to withdraw himſelf from a ſociety which ſhould form inſtitutions different from what he expected, and to contract his engagement with perſons who deſired the ſame form of government with himſelf. But if he be forced to become a member of this ſociety, it is an original violence, and he is rather a ſlave or a priſoner in the midſt of it, than any conſtituent part of it. From this argument it will reſult, that if a majority of the people have a right, at any time, to change the form of their government, the minority would be inſtantly releaſed from the obligation of its contract, and the ſociety ſo far diſſolved as related to them, unleſs they choſe to accede to the new eſtabliſhment by ſome new act of their own, which ſhould expreſs or infer their conſent to it. The people therefore would, by willing a new form of government, acquire no right to puniſh thoſe, either by death or confiſcation, who preſerved their allegiance to the old, or were unwilling to contract freſh engagements with the new conſtitution; and they would acquire no right to the property of thoſe, whom they might conſider as ſecretly diſpoſed to the ancient eſtabliſhments. I do not mean to infer that the minority have any right to practiſe againſt the new government from

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their attachment to the old, or that the new State be not authoriſed to repreſs and to puniſh their attacks as ſoon as ever the will of the majority of the People be clearly aſcertained to be in favour of the innovation; but to impreſs upon their minds, that no Revolution can give them any title to the wealth of others, or to a partition of their property; and that if they mean to be honeſt, they will remain neither richer nor poorer under any form of government or diſtribution of powers. To puniſh a man becauſe he is of the opinion of the minority is of the perfect eſſence of tyranny, which oppreſſes every thing in a State but its own partizans; and wherever there is no protection for the weaker party in a government, the majority itſelf does not enjoy liberty, but power. The People, therefore, could acquire no right to the property of individuals, if they were to will a new form of government; and indeed if they could acquire ſuch a title, or poſſeſs themſelves of it without crimes and their puniſhment, what Government could exiſt through the hardſhips of a ſingle winter, or ſurvive a ſingle accident, either natural or political, ſince the poor, the majority of every ſociety, would have nothing to do but to will a new Conſtitution, and take poſſeſſion of the ſtock and proviſions of the ſmall number of rich?

To animate the People, therefore, againſt the exiſting Conſtitution will always, I think, be uſeleſs, till their morals and their hearts be ſo far corrupted, that they can be brought to look with indifference upon the crimes which are held out as their temptation and reward; and ſuch perſons as may be gained over by theſe hopes and ſpeculations, will probably be only thoſe whoſe preference for idleneſs and plunder to the honeſt callings of an induſtrious and reputable life, muſt have decided them in favour of the highway or the gaming-table, if they had not been abſorbed in the vortex of Revolutions.

ANOTHER temptation which is held out to the People as a powerful inducement to make them *will* a new Conſtitution, is the promiſe of being releaſed from our numerous taxes, which they are told are Tyranny. If this is the caſe, it is uſeleſs to dream of liberty, ſince there are revenues and revenue laws in every country in the world where men are civilized, or have choſen to forego the precarious feaſt of the chaſe for the annual productions of the earth, and to exchange the "Rights of Man" for the comforts and ſecurity of Civil Societies; and even where men remain in this barbarous and ſavage ſituation, there appears

appears to be ſome contribution in kind towards the perſonal convenience or ceremony of their Chief. Whether it be a ſhell, a ſkin, or a feather, it appears that in the ſmalleſt troops of ſavages there is ſome individual gift to him whoſe perſon repreſents the Society; and among nations of ſhepherds, the Sheiks appear to enjoy not only a greater proportion of perſonal property, but a regular and ſtated ſubſiſtence, which is the contribution of theſe erratic populations.

The expence of every Government muſt be defrayed by the People; and if neceſſity compel a State to anticipate its reſources, and to contract debts with its ſubjects or with foreigners, the will of the People can never extinguiſh them without a crime equivalent to that of a fraudulent bankruptcy, or an impudent and cruel refuſal to perform the counterpart of a condition, of which it has received and enjoyed the beneficial intereſt.

To tempt the People, therefore, to ſhake off the Conſtitution of their anceſtors, that they may ſhake off with it the burthens which were contracted to ſecure it, is neither fair nor honeſt; for they have already received and enjoyed the rents of

the eſtate, and the bequeathment was a large and productive poſſeſſion, though it was made ſubject to a mortgage for a debt contracted to ſecure its title and warranty for ever. And if ſuch a maxim could be eſtabliſhed, it would neceſſarily follow, that no nation or people on the earth could henceforward find relief under famine, or any other exigency, from the credit they enjoyed either abroad or at home; and that neither individuals nor States would be able or willing to ſuccour or aſſiſt them under their neceſſities, or to advance the funds which ſhould be neceſſary to extract them from their difficulties or dangers. The People of England, as well as the Government, are bound by the National Parliamentary contracts to the Public Creditor; and no Revolution, no new form of Government, could releaſe them from the obligation. Were they now to prefer a Republican, or any other form of government, they could not extinguiſh the debt they have contracted, nor forget the memory of the benefits they have received, and the bleſſings they have enjoyed, during more than a century, under that mild Government which ſucceeded the competitions of the Crown and the People; and which, cementing all intereſts together by a firm and reciprocal engagement, has enabled

us

us to enjoy, without fear or envy, all the advantages of freedom at home, with ſome of that weight and importance which nothing but the unity of will and the ſecrecy of councils, together with the certainty and celerity of execution, can ever preſerve to a nation in its foreign tranſactions. If it were poſſible for us to become more free and more happy than we have been, we ſhould not therefore become diſcharged from the duty we owe of paying thoſe who riſked their perſonal fortunes to procure for us that degree of liberty and proſperity which we have enjoyed ſince the Revolution in 1688. And whether at the end of a long civil war we found ourſelves governed by a King, or a Convention, or a Livery of London, or by another Cromwell, the ſame obligation would remain to us, both morally and politically, to diſcharge the debts which were contracted in every period of the cauſe. Thoſe incumbrances upon the land, which are but the expences of the trial, muſt be acquitted by whoever is put in poſſeſſion, whether the ſuit were begun by his great-grandfather or himſelf.

Those taxes, therefore, which are levied for the payment of intereſt of the National Debt can never be reduced by any fair or honourable method

method but by a payment of their principal ; and it is much to be doubted, whether any new form of Government would be able to make greater advances in this uſeful and neceſſary ſcheme than what the actual Government has effected in a few years by the payment of the annual million, and accumulation of the extinguiſhed intereſt upon them ; particularly if it ſhould, at the ſame time, attempt, like the actual Government, to remit entire taxes to the People, and thereby diminiſh the total amount of the Revenue.

WHETHER it were wiſer to carry the whole amount of the ſurplus of the revenue to the reduction of the National Debt, or to extinguiſh ſo many taxes as produced that ſurplus, without regard to any diminution of our debit account, or to divide it between both, or, as it has been expreſſed, between the preſent age and poſterity, I ſhall not at preſent enquire ; it is a queſtion of ſedater politics than the times will bear, and ſuppoſes a greater degree of proſperity and duration of tranquillity than ſome perſons are willing we ſhould enjoy. I ſhall only mention here, that if the preſent Government extinguiſhes our public debt by legal and fair modes of liquidation, and if any new Conſtitution is to extinguiſh it by force, or a chicanery rather of tyranny

tyranny than fraud, it appears to me more preferable to abide by our ſlow but honeſt gains, and to pay off our incumbrances by a ſafe and regular progreſſion of ſavings, than to cut the throats of our juſt creditors, and throw their bonds into the fire. The will of a majority of the People can never make this lawful; and therefore ſuch a promiſe is no better than the hope of confiſcation and partition, and will tempt no man who could reſiſt the offers of a robber to partake in the ſpoils and plunder of the travellers he ſhould ſtrip.

In private life, were one individual to make ſuch a propoſition to another, he would be turned out of ſociety with ignominy and marks of contempt and diſgrace: to propoſe ſo baſe and profligate a ſcheme to the moſt generous and enlightened nation in Europe; does not, I ſhould imagine, one whit the leſs expoſe the author to infamy, than if he had offered a plan of robbery, or a partnerſhip in theft, to an individual.

Among other inſinuations and inducements which are held out to the People to *will* a new form of Government, and incite them to the love of Revolutions, is a paſſage in the "Rights "of Man," Part the Second, page 34, &c. &c. which I think it particularly neceſſary to take notice

notice of.—" The whole amount of the aſſeſſed " taxes in France," ſays this writer, " for the " preſent year, is three hundred millions of livres, " which is twelve millions and a half ſterling, " and the incidental taxes are eſtimated at three " millions, making in the whole fifteen millions " and a half; which, among twenty-five millions " of people, is not quite thirteen ſhillings *per* " head. France has leſſened her taxes ſince the " Revolution near nine millions ſterling annually. " Before the Revolution, the City of Paris paid " a duty of upwards of thirty *per cent.* upon all " articles brought into the City. This tax was " taken off on the firſt of laſt May, and the gates " taken down."

I SHALL not endeavour to confute the calculation made by this writer upon the actual ſtate of the finances of France, if he knows any thing concerning them, he knows more than the party who governed that kingdom deſigned ſhould be known by any perſon, and I am confident more than any perſon knows with certainty; but ſince, notwithſtanding the ſilence of the National Aſſembly and Convention, and the abſolute refuſal of the Conſtituent Aſſembly to paſs any account whatſoever, this gentleman chooſes to aſſert that the French levy at preſent fifteen millions and a half ſterling,

and

and that ſince the Revolution they have leſſened nine millions ſterling annually, the reſult would be, that they levied twenty-four millions and a half annually before the Revolution. Now the total of the intereſt of the national debt, both in perpetual funds and in annuities, which would extinguiſh themſelves in courſe of time, amounted, as is ſtated by M. Neckar in his "Account of the Adminiſtration of the Finances of France," vol. ii. p. 290, to the annual ſum of two hundred and ſeven millions of livres, and the contributions levied upon the people to the ſum of five hundred and eighty-five millions, which left a deficiency for the total of the annual expences of the Government of twenty-five millions: P. 233-4.

THE Account ſtands thus:

Intereſt of the National Debt,	207,000,000
Amount of Taxes,	585,000,000
Total of Expenditure,	610,000,000
From the total of the Expenditure of the French Government, ſubſtract the Intereſt of the National Debt,	610,000,000
	207,000,000
	403,000,000

The expences of the French Government therefore amounted annually to four hundred and three millions of livres; or, ſixteen millions and two hundred ninety thouſand pounds ſterling.

THIS account is taken from the ſtatement for the year 1785, when Mr. Neckar, no doubt, wiſhed to impreſs the moſt favourable ideas both of the Finances and the Government; and ſince that time, I do not imagine that any thing has been publiſhed in France upon the ſubject of Finances, upon which any man, unintereſted in the momentary credit of its circumſtances, would chooſe to rely, or venture to commit himſelf. The Memoirs of M. de Monteſquieu and of M. de Claviere are, perhaps, the only romances that have ever been written upon this dry and unentertaining ſubject, and as ſuch may be entitled to the merit of originality and invention; but will never be cited by the œconomiſt or hiſtorian, except to prove the miſerable ignorance and perverſity of a people who regard nothing ſo little as truth, whether it relate to their affairs or their amours, their enemies or themſelves.

FROM this maſs of expenditure it might have been poſſible to ſubſtract nine millions in the progreſs

greſs of time and reformation, but it was impoſſible to do it at a moment, any more than a wound can be healed, or an iſſue dried upon the inſtant, without endangering the health of the whole body. The ulcers of the ſtate were acrid and inveterate, and they were not to be cured by a ſlight-of-hand or a noſtrum; but the fact is, not that the expenditure is diminiſhed, but that the people have diſcovered a treaſure, which they ſpend with the prodigality and waſte that is ever found ready to diſtribute again into the common maſs thoſe acquirements which are the fruits of any thing but ſucceſsful induſtry and honeſt employment.—Gameſters are ſuppoſed to be liberal not from generoſity, but becauſe of the eaſe and the chance by which they become rich; and Governments diſperſe with prodigality whatever they are able to poſſeſs beyond the fair and rated contributions of the people. That nation is not living upon its annual produce, but upon its capital, and therefore it muſt ſuddenly arrive at bankruptcy and ruin. Their paper, which is hypothecated upon the ſpoils of the Church, and that which may hereafter gain currency by repreſenting the forfeited eſtates of their exiles, muſt come to a period; but till it does come to a period, the Government will never dare to impoſe any taxes upon the people, becauſe the people have been cozened and cajoled by the

promiſes of reformers, and are perſuaded that they never again ſhall be called upon to pay their contributions.

But if the French levied fifteen millions and a half annually, and received the taxes as they do in paper, at a diſcount ſometimes of eighty, and, I believe, never leſs than fifty *per cent.* they would not receive more than from nine to ten millions ſterling; and this, one would naturally imagine, would ſtrengthen the poſition of the Author, and enable him to place more millions upon the ſide of reduction. But he well knows that the French do not receive half the revenue for which he has credited them, and that ſcarcely any taxes are levied at all. That country carries on an expenſive and ruinous war without either loans or taxes, and maintains a Government at home more prodigal and rapacious than a thouſand Courts. And why? Becauſe it dares not make its ſituation known to the nation, nor demand of it thoſe aids and contributions, without which no form of Government can ſubſiſt, but which it cannot exact from a people whom it has deceived, and who, paying none or ſcarce any taxes, would conſider the appearance of a revenue-officer as a counter-revolution in itſelf. This light and inconſiderate people were indeed induced

to

to believe the gigantic promiſes of philoſophers and reformers, and are aſtoniſhed to find that though they have hitherto, in a great degree, been kept to them, rather from the weakneſs than the good faith of their Governors, they are not one iota the richer than when they paid their contributions, which, they begin to ſuſpect, were ſomehow or other, notwithſtanding abuſes, diſcharged for them by the richer claſſes of ſociety. They begin to perceive that the capital of the nation cannot for ever ſuffice for the enormous expences of their internal adminiſtration, and for the maintenance of the numerous armies employed not only in the neceſſary defence of their infant republic, but in ſo many and diſtant enterprizes of ambition and conqueſt, and that they feel there muſt ſoon be an end to ſo much prodigality and waſte; while the Government knows, on the other hand, that to inſiſt upon, or even to enquire into taxation, is to burſt the bubble of this mighty reformation, and to diſcloſe to the people this fatal truth, That to live they muſt be induſtrious, and to be protected they muſt contribute. The Author of "Rights of "Man" was aware that the people of England would be ſtartled if he told them that their revolted neighbours paid no taxes at all, and that

their

their good ſenſe would ſuggeſt to them that ſuch a ſyſtem was impoſſible to become ſolid and permanent. He therefore prudently concealed from them the exceſs of the temporary immunity they would enjoy if they were pleaſed to follow his counſels, and to *will* a Revolution. He knew that they would quickly diſcern, that the moment the French Government ſhould take any form or conſiſtency, the weight of taxes would return with redoubled hardſhip upon a ruined people and an exhauſted land. The plunder of the public property, and the devaſtation of the national demeſnes, ſold at low prices to ſpeculators and adventurers, and leaſed to fugitive tenants, who would rack the ſoil, and anticipate the juſt returns of the earth; the exportation of their ſpecie, and the complete annihilation of their manufactures; the loſs of their iſlands, the injuries of their navigation and commerce, and a terrible depopulation, the moſt irreparable of all national misfortunes, have long precluded the French nation from equalizing their revenue with their expenditure, and probably for ever from funding that enormous and incomputable debt which they contract with a ſuſpicious ſilence, or, perhaps, with a fatal ſecurity.

If ever again their Government ſhould have force to demand, or their People virtue to ſupply, the

the neceſſary contributions, there will appear not only a dreadful deficiency, but a total inability to equal them with the exigencies of the State, and their extenſive frontier muſt remain undefended, or the internal Provinces of the Kingdom be drained and exhauſted for their defence; their unwieldy and unconnected Empire muſt diſmember for partial ſecurity, or the whole State, become rotten and hollow, expire of inward weakneſs and decay, while it preſents a hectic appearance of health to the nations which ſurround it, but which it has neither vigour to ſupply, nor arteries to diſtribute, nor veſſels to return, to the heart.

The People of Paris, however, being nearer the ſeat of Government, are obliged to pay an equivalent for the reduction of the tax upon entries, which the Author ſtates to have been thirty *per cent.* upon all articles of conſumption. This tax is called the *Patente*, or Licence Tax, and is a direct impoſition of twenty-five *per cent.* upon houſe-rent. The inhabitants of Paris are, with reaſon, diſcontented with the Commutation; and the price of proviſions is not diminiſhed by the reduction of the entries. The prices of wine, and other neceſſary articles of conſumption, are conſiderably augmented ſince the Revolution, notwithſtanding the withdrawing of the duties.

THE amount of the intereſt of the National Debt in France we have ſtated to be 207,000,000, and of the annual expenditure 403,000,000: the deficiency therefore in taxes in the laſt proſperous æra of that kingdom was twenty-five millions, or one million and forty thouſand pounds ſterling. At this time all their antient taxes, even their gabelles and corvées, were rigorouſly exacted.

SINCE that period, it is well known that their moſt oppreſſive and their moſt productive taxes have been ſuppreſſed. Taxes upon land and houſes are almoſt all that remain; for their Stamp Act and the *Patentes* are not much attended to, except in Paris, where the latter is a very ſevere impoſition. But it is uſeleſs to ſketch out the ruin of their revenue; let us turn our eyes to Mr. Paine's ſtatement of our own, and endeavour to ſee if he can fairly recommend to us the plan, or hold out to us a hope of making a ſimilar reduction in the expenditure of the Government, even were it poſſible that the People ſhould think the ruin of the country, its trade and colonies, compenſated by the ſaving; or conſole themſelves with the figures of republican parſimony for the loſs of the effective power and proſperity of the kingdom.

In the calculation I am going to make, to prevent all diſpute, I ſhall confine myſelf to the preciſe words of the Author himſelf.

" The amount of the taxes may be taken in " round numbers at ſeventeen millions, &c.

" This ſum of ſeventeen millions is applied " to two different purpoſes: the one to pay the " intereſt of the National Debt; the other to the " current expences of each year. About nine " millions are appropriated to the former; and the " remainder, being nearly eight millions, to the " latter. As to the million ſaid to be applied to the " reduction of the debt, it is ſo like paying with one " hand and taking out with the other, as not to " merit much notice."

As Mr. P. thinks this million not worth much notice, the only notice I ſhall take of it will be to deduct it from his account; for a million taken with one hand and paid with the other is entitled to no credit upon either ſide of the account, and a million received and remitted is undoubtedly not a million to be carried to the public expenditure.

THE figures will then ſtand thus :

Amount of Taxes,	17,000,000
Intereſt of National Debt,	9,000,000
Annual Reduction of Debt,	1,000,000
Balance,	7,000,000
Annual Expenditure in England,	7,000,000
Annual Expenditure in France,	16,290,000

FROM this ſtatement, from which I could make many juſt deductions, it appears, that nine millions might be very juſtly and honeſtly ſaved from the expence of the French Government, but that ſuch a ſum would be much greater than the whole charges of the Engliſh. I do not think it at preſent worth while to go into the detail of the expence, becauſe it is annually and publicly accounted for in Parliament, and paſſes as ſtrict an examination as the accounts of merchants or bankers, being regularly audited before the Houſe of Commons, and ſubmitted to the whole nation, who are as able to detect frauds or errors in it as if they had all been educated at the Grammar-School at Thetford.

This leads me to conſider, whether a reduction of taxes be calculated to diminiſh the burthens of the lower claſſes of Society? I ſhall take a very ſummary view of this queſtion, becauſe I hope to place it in ſuch a light as to convince them, with eaſe, that the promiſes held out to them, beſides their guilt and immorality, are perfectly vain and illuſory.

The price of labour is never fixed by the employer, whether he be a farmer or a manufacturer, but by the labourer himſelf; or, to ſpeak ſtrictly, by the competition between the perſons who are willing to be employed in any particular branch of induſtry. It has a natural tendency to reduce itſelf to the loweſt ratio poſſible upon which the workman can live in every populous country; and in every ill-inhabited country it will naturally riſe to the higheſt ratio poſſible which the undertaker can afford, ſo as to leave a profit for himſelf. The more proſperous, therefore, any country actually is, and the greater its population, the lower will be the price of wages; becauſe this, on the one hand, enables the manufacturer to vie with, or to underſell, his competitors in the foreign market, and becauſe the greater the number of perſons to be employed, the leſs

wages will they be willing to work for, from the fear of being totally excluded and deprived of employment. But let a man be willing to work for ever ſo ſmall a compenſation, he is incapable to labour (and it is far from the intereſt of his employer that he ſhould) for a ſtipend inſufficient to ſupport him in health and vigour, and to maintain and bring up his family; which is neceſſary for the ſupply of the perpetual and increaſing demand for labour, that always keeps pace with the wealth and proſperity of a nation. If taxes were low, the price of labour would *decreaſe*, and the competition of labourers would enable the manufacturer to withhold a part of the wages he was accuſtomed to pay them. If taxes were augmented, he muſt augment the price of wages in proportion; becauſe if he did not, his labourer would be unable to do him the ſame ſervice, being no longer able to procure himſelf the ſame ſubſiſtence. As long as foreign commerce ſhall be an object of the national ambition, the price of wages muſt be what is called low; becauſe every other country, where it ſhall become or continue low, will otherwiſe drive us out of the foreign market, and underſell us in all our manufactures. Suppoſe, for inſtance, the price of wages were advanced by means of a Revolution, or by the effect of one of thoſe deluſive promiſes made

by

by our innovating philoſophers to the people in any branch of our manufactures, that manufacture could no longer export itſelf into the foreign market; and the ſale being ſtopped, the manufacture would ſtop alſo. Theſe artificers therefore, inſtead of receiving an advance of wages, would be thrown entirely out of employment, and muſt either ſtarve, or betake themſelves to ſome other ſpecies of induſtry, which they would have to learn, and for which they muſt be contented to work at a very conſiderable abatement during their inexperience and apprenticeſhip.

This article of taxation is of ſuch extreme importance to the great maſs of Society, that it is no wonder that men hoſtile to the tranquillity and proſperity of the kingdom ſhould endeavour to miſrepreſent it in ſo many ſhapes, and to make it an inſtrument to excite the reſentment of the people on the one hand, and its hopes and avidity on the other; for if the people could be perſuaded that their contribution to the exigencies of the State and the maintenance of Government were a mark of ſlavery or an engine of oppreſſion, or that they would be entitled by any Revolution to divide the public revenues among them, the Apoſtles of Novelties would not ſo often have to ſtrike the duſt off their feet. The natural impatience of mankind

kind under almoſt every condition of life, and that eager deſire of novelties and flattering hope which makes uncertainties ſo dear to the human breaſt, would betray their reaſon, and the paſſions would make proſelytes of the great body of the nation. I ſhall here examine ſome of thoſe dangerous and inſidious promiſes; and while I prove their falſity, I ſhall alſo prove that it was known to the writer, into whoſe motives for publiſhing them I ſhall finally conclude with enquiring.

In the ancient periods of the Engliſh Government, when there was very little foreign commerce, and that little imperfectly underſtood; when there were but few articles of luxury, and ſcarce any conſumption but of agricultural produce; it was found exceedingly difficult to provide by a regular revenue for the permanent expences of the Crown, and ſtill more ſo for the unavoidable exigencies which are the caſualties of every State. Before the diſcovery of South America, and the conſequent importation of ſilver and gold into Europe, theſe metals repreſented a much larger quantity of the neceſſary articles of life, and the ingenuity of man had not as yet ſupplied the deficiency by the invention and circulation of paper. The people, however, made the beſt proviſion they were able for the ſupport of the

the Government, which conſiſted principally in the aſſignment of a very liberal portion of land as an eſtate to the King, and in certain rights and beneficial advantages over the hereditary eſtates of every landholder in the kingdom. They allowed him alſo the excluſive controul of commerce, on which ſuch duties were levied as he was able to impoſe; and the exports and imports of the kingdom produced the firſt revenue which was not of a feudal or territorial nature for the Crown.

THERE exiſted alſo peculiar caſes in which it was lawful to call upon the landholders of the kingdom for additional ſupplies, which were fixed at certain rates, and were only exigible upon the occurrence of the particular circumſtances for which they were provided. Such was the marriage of the King's daughter, and the knighthood of his ſon, which was conſidered by our warlike anceſtors as a ſpecies of military manhood or majority; and the impriſonment of the Sovereign himſelf, if the chance of war left him in the hands of his enemies.

IN extraordinary exigences the King applied to the Parliament for aids, or exacted benevolences from the people. The Commons of England were

ever

ever ſparing of the ſmall treaſure of their conſtituents; and they granted with a jealous and ſullen liberality, or refuſed with the dignity of freemen who thought they had a Conſtitution, and that they acted up to the ſpirit of it.

All the military ſervices were performed by the tenants of the Crown, and an army was as yet unknown in England, except during the actual ſtate of hoſtilities.

At a very early period of our hiſtory after the Conqueſt, theſe military ſervices were commuted for money, with which the King raiſed more regular troops, who for the firſt time ſerved for pay. The Siege of Veia, carried on during one winter, changed the whole Roman militia into regular troops, and the feudal militia gave place in the ſame manner to the neceſſity of providing for military expeditions at a greater diſtance from home, and at different ſeaſons of the year from thoſe at which the huſbandman could abandon his occupations.

The rights and the revenues which the Crown enjoyed from private eſtates, and the influence and authority they conferred upon it over the perſons and liberty of individuals, were in proceſs of

time

time found to be oppreſſive, and, after ſeveral attempts and negotiations, were finally redeemed by the Nation in the reign of Charles the Second, who received in exchange an annual income from taxes, which the proſperity of the country, whoſe commerce had now expanded and developed itſelf, enabled it to offer in lieu of the proviſion which its former poverty and the barrenneſs of its reſources had forced it to impoſe upon itſelf.

Since that time the introduction of a National Debt, the neceſſity of maintaining numerous armies, garriſons, and navies, originally impoſed upon us by the dangerous policy and ambition of France; the expences inſeparable from war, and even from victory, have compelled the nation to ſubmit to many other burthens, and to multiply the catalogue of taxes to that length, which is detailed with ſo much malignity and perfidiouſneſs to the people. The greater part of theſe taxes are laid upon conſumption; and I know of no caſe where the conſumer is not ultimately the perſon taxed; though there are, no doubt, ſome in which it is advanced by the grower, and many by the manufacturer for him, till by becoming a purchaſer he diſcharges this impoſition, together with

the expence of labour, and the original value of the commodity which is delivered to him.

Were we, according to the viſions of our ſelf-named philoſophers, to form a new Conſtitution at this time, I do not think it would be very difficult to induce the people of England to prefer this equal and voluntary mode of contributing to the public expences, before the hardſhips of the feudal ſyſtem, and of perſonal ſervices at their own expence in the army, as well as the burthens of military tenures, of marriages and wardſhips.

If a people be to contribute at all to the expences of the State, I am not able to learn by what means or proportions they can better acquit them than by the actual method of taxation; and if they are not to contribute, I cannot diſcover how they can either enjoy ſecurity at home, or prevent themſelves from becoming a prey to the firſt foreign invader. In the reign of one of our Sovereigns the Parliament granted a ſmall ſubſidy to the King, and concluded its donation with a requeſt, that "the King would henceforward be "pleaſed to live off his own." Were we at this day to purſue this policy of our anceſtors, it would firſt be incumbent upon us to reſtore to the Crown all

all thoſe claims and rights which we have bought of it, and to fix and entail ſome immenſe part of the territory of England, as an eſtate which ſhould veſt and forever abide in the Government. But would it be ſafe, or would it be wiſe or honeſt to give the Government a greater intereſt in Cornwall or in Cumberland, in Kent or in Norfolk, or to create any local preference or affection for one part of the kingdom over another? or ought there to be any other proviſion for the Sovereign than that which may be ſaid to overflow from the abundance and proſperity of the country? Theſe taxes, which are ſaid to be taken from the people, return again upon them like the dew in ſhowers. We do not look upon their produce with the jaundiced eyes of enemies, but with exultation and triumph, ſince their overflow is a proof either that we conſume more, or that we have more to conſume: on the one hand, we behold the comforts of life increaſed and ſpread around through every order of the State; on the other, our increaſed population aſſures us of the falſehood and abſurdity of theſe perfidious complaints and exaggerations.

"EVERY perſon in England, male and female," ſays Mr. Paine *, "pays on an average in taxes "two pounds eight ſhillings and ſixpence from the

* Page 70.

" day of his birth; and if the expence of collection " be added, he pays two pounds eleven ſhillings " and ſixpence."

THE artifice of this ſtatement is ſo glaring, that had the writer hoped to make an impreſſion upon any but the moſt illiterate claſſes of ſociety, he would never have ventured it ſo open and undiſguiſed. If the taxes in England were all levied at one impoſition, and men were aſſeſſed by the head, ſuch a mode of computation would be reaſonable and fair; but Mr. Paine knows that the taxes of England being impoſed upon land, and upon conſumption, are paid nearly in an exact proportion to every man's income and expence. There are perſons in England who pay thouſands a-year to Government, this being the proportion of the aſſeſſment upon their eſtates and their expenditure; there are whole claſſes who pay only a few ſhillings; and ſurely Mr. Paine does not mean to tell the people of England, that when he was at the Grammar-ſchool at Thetford, under the care of the Rev. Mr. Knowles, who taught heroiſm with full as much ſucceſs as grammar, however Mr. P. may be convinced of its falſity, that he paid as large a contribution to the Government, or that he conſumed as many articles of

taxation

taxation and luxury, as he has done ſince he has become a frequenter of Clubs and a politician.

THIS is the admirable order of our public revenue, that the rich part of the ſociety pays frequently directly, and always finally in conſumption, the principal part of the produce of every impoſition. The debt is diſcharged for the ſervant by his maſter, and for the huſbandman by the farmer, and is finally adjuſted and accounted with him in his leaſe; and the taxes, which muſt inevitably be paid by the pooreſt claſs of labourers and artificers, are a part of the conſideration of their wages.

BUT if the pooreſt man in England were to contribute by inſenſible payments upon conſumption this exaggerated ſum of two pounds eleven ſhillings and ſixpence *per annum*;—though it is clear that whoever pays impoſitions to this amount is a conſumer to an equal degree with the average of all the individuals in the State, and that therefore he enjoys his fair proportion of comforts, though ſome other perſons may have more of them and ſome leſs;—it is clear, I ſay, that he can have no right to complain: for if things were reduced to the moſt perfect equality, his ſituation would be already

already found in ſociety, and ought neither to be injured nor improved; and it is clear too, that it is only the perſon who pays leſs than this ſum who can have any title to redreſs. The beginning, therefore, of the complaint is not, that we pay ſo much as two pounds eleven ſhillings and ſixpence, but that we enjoy ſo ſmall a portion of the comforts and luxuries of life, that our dividend of taxes does not amount to this ſum, which ought to be our *quota*. But I doubt much, whether it would anſwer Mr. Paine's purpoſe to put the matter in this light to the people; becauſe, very fortunately, they are able to judge upon every plain propoſition, and it is only by ſophiſtry and complication that he can hope to deceive them.

When he ſtates the ſmall amount of taxes in former times, it would have been more candid to have ſtated the great variation in the value of money, and the enormous diſproportion between the numbers of the people which has progreſſively taken place.—I have not at preſent any very accurate calculations of this nature by me, but the value of money is ſuppoſed to have decreaſed, ſince the reign of Henry VI. nine-tenths, ſo that two ſhillings in that time was equivalent to a pound ſterling at preſent; and in the remoter periods which

which he takes for his calculations, ſpecie muſt have borne a conſiderably greater value, or repreſented a much larger quantity of corn and manufacture. The number of the people among whom this amount was to be divided, was not probably more than a fourth or a third part of the preſent population of Great Britain; and it is not perfectly fair to have omitted telling the people what was the price of labour, what wages were uſual and cuſtomary at theſe epochs when taxation ſeemed ſo light and ſupportable. In the reign of Edward the Third, the Parliament endeavoured to fix the price of wages, which had riſen from very natural cauſes, and particularly that of depopulation, in conſequence of the peſtilence and the long and waſteful wars of this military reign *. A reaper in the firſt week of Auguſt was not allowed to take above two-pence a-day, in the ſecond week a third more; a maſter carpenter was limited to three-pence a-day all the year round, and a common carpenter to two-pence.—Had Jack Cade or Wat Tyler publiſhed "Rights of Man" in the minority of the next reign, it is probable that their calculation upon the *quota* of taxes paid by

* 37. Edw. III. ch. 3.

each

each individual upon an average through the whole ſociety, had preſented a much greater proportion of their wages, of the returns of labour, and the produce of induſtry which were torn from them to make up the ſum of 130,000l. (which is the amount of the taxes annually paid, according to Sir John Sinclair's calculation for the neareſt period to theſe times). Yet this two-pence a-day appears to have been an enormous price for labour, and meant only as a temporary augmentation during the aſtoniſhing depopulation of the kingdom; for the faint beginnings of trade had not as yet, in all probability, withdrawn many hands from agricultural employments, nor raiſed a competition of wages between the induſtry of cities and that of the fields.

The people of this country, and, I am not afraid to aſſert, the people of every other, will find, if they will turn over the Hiſtory of Human Societies, that wherever the taxes were low, the price of wages was ſo alſo; and they will perceive the perfidiouſneſs of thoſe promiſes which are held out to them with regard to the diminution of the taxes; the benefit of which reduction, however deſirable for the extenſion of our foreign commerce, would to them prove entirely nominal and illuſory, even

were

were it poſſible for it to take place in any greater degree or ſhorter period than they may look to at the hands of Government itſelf, which has already, in ſome meaſure, anticipated the clamorous demands of perſons, who, without feeling or pity for the ſtate of humanity, would traffic with the peace, with the happineſs, and with the blood of the people of theſe kingdoms, and with the language of hypocriſy and ſeduction perſuade them to exchange the returns of their honeſt induſtry, and the comforts of a ſecure and innocent life, for the uncertain and fugitive ſpoils of war and pillage, which are to be torn from the bowels of their bleeding country, which are to be divided with guilt and danger, and enjoyed with fear and remorſe.

I WOULD aſk, however, of theſe falſe friends, Whether, allowing all the grievances to exiſt which they detail and deſcant upon with ſuch viſible pleaſure and exultation—whether, allowing taxes to be as unjuſt and tyrannical as they pretend, they are more likely to be diminiſhed by the unavoidable expences of war, and the waſte of our lands and cities, by the ruin of our manufactures and the ſuſpenſion of our commerce, than by the peaceable operations of Government, and the gra-

dual reduction both of debt and taxes, which it is enabled to make from the unrivalled proſperity of the Country?

WHETHER, if the rich members of ſociety were mowed down by this ſcythe of equalization, they would be ſure always to provide employment for the poor, or hoſpitals for the unfortunate?

WHETHER, if the exceſs of taxation now paid by the wealthy were reduced to the average of Mr. Paine, the poor would not be obliged to pay more than their preſent proportion?

WHETHER the manufactures could continue to flouriſh when there ſhould be no wealthy perſons to wear them; and when the high price of labour ſhould have ſhut the foreign market againſt them?

WHETHER, when the manufactures ſhould be ruined, the people muſt not ſtarve for want of employment?

WHETHER the duties now paid upon exports, muſt not be made good by freſh taxes upon the people?

AND,

And, Whether we ought to withdraw our confidence from the Houſe of Commons, who, by whatever means it is elected, cannot either ſacrifice our property or betray our liberties, without the groſſeſt folly and abſurdity, ſince they have more at ſtake than we have, to place it either in our ancient enemies of France, or in the emiſſaries of America?

There is ſomething ſo abſurd and ridiculous in the very ſtatement of a coalition and confederacy with France, that I really cannot condeſcend for myſelf, or think ſo meanly of other people's underſtandings, as to miſ-ſpend our common time in expoſing it. But it is not unimportant to recall to mind, that this very treatiſe, called "Rights of "Man," is dedicated to Monſ. de la Fayette; and the reaſon aſſigned for this opprobrious compliment, is the ſervices rendered by that officer to the Author's "beloved America."

Mr. Paine is an Engliſhman, at leaſt he tells us ſo, and therefore he had with more propriety, more patriotiſm, and more honeſty, talked of his "beloved England;" but there is ſome crime or other which he has never forgiven his country, and he ſeems to have ſworn, and to be determined to execute, a memorable vengeance.

THE following Extract from his Pamphlet will prove at how early a period he conceived this hoſtile idea, and how uſeful he conceived the propagation of his inſidious doctrines and promiſes would prove to the combined enemies of Great Britain.

"DURING the war, in the latter end of the "year 1780, I formed to myſelf a deſign of com- "ing over to England, and communicated it to "General Greene, who was then in America on "his route to the Southward, General Waſhing- "ton being then at too great a diſtance to com- "municate with immediately. I was ſtrongly "impreſſed with the idea, that if I could get over to "England without being known, and only re- "main in ſafety till I could get out a publication, "that I could open the eyes of the nation with "reſpect to the madneſs and ſtupidity of its Go- "vernment. I ſaw that the parties in Parliament "had pitted themſelves as far as they could go, "and could make no new impreſſions on each "other. General Greene entered fully into my "views, but the affair of Arnold and André hap- "pening juſt after, he changed his mind, and, under "ſtrong apprehenſions for my ſafety, wrote very "preſſingly to me, from Annapolis, to give up

"the

" the deſign, which with ſome reluctance I did."
" Rights of Man," Part II. p. 53. Note.

" WHEN the American Revolution was eſta-
" bliſhed, I felt a diſpoſition to ſit ſerenely down
" and enjoy the calm. It did not appear to me
" that any object could afterwards ariſe great
" enough to make me quit tranquillity, and feel
" as I had felt before; but when principle, not
" place, is the energetic cauſe of action, a man, I
" find, is everywhere the ſame." Preface to the Same.

THERE is no knowing what effect the inflammatory language of Mr. Paine might have produced upon the people at the cloſe of a long and unfortunate war, which had, above every other national calamity, the peculiar horror of arming Engliſhmen againſt Engliſhmen, and preſenting the diſguſting picture of civil war, which he now wiſhes to rekindle amongſt them.

I AM tempted to believe, that Providence reſerved the calamities of his doctrines for a guiltier people, and that the ſcourge was averted from our backs by the Supreme interference; and ſurely, if we be permitted to believe that any nation is

ſtill

ſtill its care, or any ſyſtem entitled to its protection, it will be pardonable to ſuppoſe that it may be the freeſt People and the ſublimeſt Conſtitution.

We have read that Hampden, in deſpair of Liberty, had once embarked for America, but was detained by an order of Council; and thus was the ſoul of Freedom prevented from migrating from Britain, by the very tyranny it was deſtined to deſtroy. Alas! why does the corruption of our manners and the general depravation forbid us to believe, that the ſame ſuperintending care averted Paine from our coaſts, which would not ſuffer Hampden to leave them?

With reſpect to what is ſaid ſo repeatedly of inalienable and impreſcriptible rights, and the aſſertion and denial of their being in the contemplation of America at the time of her ſeparation from Great Britain, I beg leave to extract a paſſage from a Declaration of Congreſs in the year 1776, four years before the fate of the unfortunate Major André had intimidated rather than converted Mr. Paine. It will ſerve to ſhew that the Repreſentatives of the United States of America were well acquainted with the real rights of mankind,

and

and that they knew with what a cautious and religious hand it was their duty to relax thoſe other rights, and to tear thoſe bonds and connexions which unite men together in ſociety. It will ſhew, that, acknowledging the abſtract exiſtence of theſe original rights, they were convinced that it was not lawful to diſſolve ſociety, and appeal to them upon every light occaſion of intereſt or diſguſt, or for the hopes of ſpeculative amendments and uncertain advantages; and that even in rejecting what they conſidered as an abſolute deſpotiſm and tyranny, they were careful to prevent the repetition of Revolutions, by defining with accuracy and preciſion the cauſes which alone could make them juſt, and the evils which could render them expedient.

" *In Congreſs, July* 4, 1776.

" A DECLARATION by the REPRESENTATIVES of " the UNITED STATES of AMERICA in GE- " NERAL CONGRESS ASSEMBLED *."

" WHEN in the courſe of human events it be- " comes neceſſary for one people to diſſolve the " political bands which have connected them with " another, and to aſſume among the Powers of

* *Vide* State Papers for that year.

" the

" the Earth the ſeparate and equal ſtation to
" which the laws of Nature and of Nature's God
" entitle them, a decent reſpect to the opinions of
" mankind requires that they ſhould declare the
" cauſes which impel them to the ſeparation.

" We hold theſe truths to be ſelf-evident: That
" all men are created equal; that they are en-
" dowed with certain unalienable rights, and that
" among theſe are life, liberty, and the purſuit of
" happineſs.

" That to ſecure theſe rights Governments
" are inſtituted among men, deriving their juſt
" powers from the conſent of the governed; and
" whenever any form of Government becomes de-
" ſtructive of theſe ends, it is the right of the peo-
" ple to alter or aboliſh it, and to inſtitute a new
" Government, laying its foundation on ſuch prin-
" ciples, and organizing its powers in ſuch form,
" as to them ſhall ſeem moſt likely to effect their
" ſafety and happineſs. Prudence indeed will
" dictate, that Governments long eſtabliſhed ſhall
" not be changed for light and tranſient cauſes;
" and accordingly all experience hath ſhewn, that
" mankind are more diſpoſed to ſuffer while evils
" are ſufferable, than to right themſelves by abo-
" liſhing the forms to which they are accuſtomed.

" But

" But when a long train of evils and abuſes, pur-
" ſuing invariably the ſame object, evinces a de-
" ſign to reduce them under abſolute deſpotiſm,
" it is their right, it is their duty to throw off
" ſuch Government, and to provide new guards for
" their future ſecurity. Such has been the pa-
" tient ſufferance of theſe Colonies, and ſuch is
" now the neceſſity which conſtrains them to alter
" their former ſyſtems of Government."

CONSTRAINT and neceſſity therefore, not viſionary notions of advantage and reform, are the motives aſſigned by the Congreſs for this dangerous appeal to the original rights of mankind; and in conformity to their profeſſions, they have confined the changes they thought neceſſary to the actual circumſtances of their ſeparation; they have ſubverted no order of Society; they have enriched no claſs at the expence of another; they have even exacted taxes to an extent and amount, which were unknown to the people of thoſe States during their connection with Great Britain; they have preached no levelling doctrines; they have reviled no laws; they have ridiculed no government. On the contrary, they have continued or adopted thoſe very laws and uſages which we are called upon to abandon; and, placing the

 founda-

foundations of a new Government with equal freedom to chuſe among all ſyſtems and to ſelect any form or eſtabliſhment, they have preferred, as far as was applicable to their circumſtances, and altered as little as was compatible with the novelty of their independence, the laws, the manners, and even the cuſtoms of their Parent Country.

THE END.